



Washington State Ferries

WSF Port Townsend Ferry Terminal Preservation Project Outreach and Comment Summary April 20, 2005

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Washington State Ferries (WSF) is planning the Port Townsend Ferry Terminal Preservation Project to replace many of the landing structures at the Port Townsend Terminal. The existing terminal structures, including the wingwalls, dolphins, towers and transfer spans, were constructed in the early 1980s and are deteriorating rapidly. If these structures are not replaced, their declining condition could compromise ferry landings. In 2005, WSF completed an emergency construction project to replace the wingwalls of the tie-up slip. Emergency construction and maintenance projects are expensive, and WSF is looking to spend money wisely by replacing the remaining waterside structures at the terminal at once with a preservation project. Preservation projects update existing structures of a ferry terminal without significantly modifying terminal operations.

WSF is considering a number of options for the Port Townsend Ferry Terminal Preservation Project. Each of these options makes it possible to expand vehicle holding in the future. Some options include extending the slips up to 320 feet into deeper water, while other options include replacing the slips at the same location and potentially utilizing upland holding areas. Each of the configurations for terminal structures could accommodate any of the potential vessels being considered for the Port Townsend-Keystone route. The options are:

- Option A: Slips replaced in current location
- Option B: Slips extended approximately 120 feet offshore
- Option C: Slips extended approximately 220 feet offshore
- Option D: Slips extended approximately 320 feet offshore

WSF sought public comment on these potential options for the ferry terminal through an open house held Thursday, March 31, 2005. An informal comment period began with the distribution of the project newsletter in early March 2005. The following document summarizes public outreach and comments received to date.

PUBLICITY

WSF advertised the public open house in several ways. All advertisements offered general information about options being considered for the preservation project, gave date and time of the public open house, contained information on how to provide comments or ask questions, and listed Americans with Disabilities Act and Title VI information. These included:

- ✓ *Newsletter:* Over 9,000 newsletters were distributed to a Keystone-Port Townsend Project contact list, in addition to business and residence carrier routes for the Port Townsend 98368 area code. Newsletters were also distributed at the Keystone and Port Townsend Ferry Terminals, as well as by the Port Townsend Chamber of Commerce.
- ✓ *Display Ads:* Display advertisements ran on March 23, 2005 in the *Peninsula Daily News* and *Port Townsend/Jefferson County Leader*, and in the March 30, 2005 edition of the *Peninsula Daily News* “Olympic Marketplace.”
- ✓ *Email:* An email was distributed to 190 contacts on the Keystone-Port Townsend Project list serve. Another email informed Port Townsend and Keystone Ferry Advisory Committee members of the open house.
- ✓ *Route Alert:* Short email notification distributed to regular users and interested parties of the Keystone-Port Townsend route.
- ✓ *Press Release:* Distributed to the *Peninsula Daily News*, *Whidbey News-Times*, and *Port Townsend/Jefferson County Leader*.
- ✓ *Web update:* Project information was posted on the web with open house details.
- ✓ *Tribes:* Email notification was sent to applicable tribal contacts for Port Townsend Ferry Terminal. Representative were contacted from the following tribes: Lummi, Port Gamble S’Klallam, Suquamish, Tulalip, Swinomish, and Lower Elwha Klallam.
- ✓ *Meeting handout:* Open house notices were distributed at the WSF tariff meeting held in Port Townsend in late February 2005.
- ✓ *Sound Crossings:* A short article describing the Port Townsend Preservation Project and advertising the open house appeared in the February-March 2005 *Sound Crossings* newsletter.

METHODS TO GATHER PUBLIC COMMENT

WSF offered several avenues for public comment on the Port Townsend Ferry Terminal Preservation Project. They included:

- ✓ *Newsletter Postcard:* Newsletter recipients were able to cut out the postcard embedded in the newsletter and mail back to Joy Goldenberg at WSF.
- ✓ *Email:* Comments could be sent to porttownsendproject@wsdot.wa.gov at any time.
- ✓ *Mail:* Comments could be mailed to Washington State Ferries; Port Townsend Ferry Terminal Preservation Project; C/O Joy Goldenberg; 2911 2nd Avenue; Seattle, WA 98121.

- ✓ *Phone:* Questions could be directed to Joy Goldenberg at WSF, (206) 515-3411.
- ✓ *Comment Form:* During the open house, attendees could write and leave their comments in boxes provided, or mail a comment form back to WSF at the address listed above. Commenters were asked the following question:

What comments do you have regarding WSF's proposed preservation options for the Port Townsend Ferry Terminal?

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

WSF hosted a public open house Thursday, March 31, 2005 at Fort Worden Commons in Port Townsend, to inform and gather public comment on the proposed preservation options for the Port Townsend Ferry Terminal. The agenda for the evening included “open house” format from 6:30 – 7:00 p.m., followed by a short presentation by Russ East, WSF Terminal Engineering Director, and Charlie Torres, WSF Terminal Engineering Project Manager. Open house format resumed after the presentation and question and answer period. Members of the public were invited to view display boards, ask questions of project staff, and give their written comments. Display boards offered the following information:

- ✓ Why preserve the ferry terminal now? What is a preservation project?
- ✓ Construction phases
- ✓ Parts of a ferry terminal
- ✓ What is the long-term plan for the terminal?
- ✓ Preliminary project schedule
- ✓ Option A: Current Preservation and Future Improvements
- ✓ Option B: Current Preservation and Future Improvements
- ✓ Option C: Current Preservation and Future Improvements
- ✓ Option D: Current Preservation and Future Improvements
- ✓ Stay informed – Stay involved

Attendees were offered handout versions of the display boards, as well as project fact sheets and comment forms. A total of 34 members of the public attended the open house. A summary of questions asked during the question and answer period can be found in Appendix A.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED

WSF received a total of 44 public comments regarding the proposed Port Townsend Ferry Terminal Preservation Project options. Eleven were received during the open house, while 33 were received via email, mail, or newsletter postcard.

Written comments varied in nature, and were spread over 28 categories. Topics included support for remote holding and queuing, support for extension of the slips for future vehicle holding, and

concern for the poplar trees leading into Port Townsend. Tallies of comment categories follow, with the highest category, “Vehicle Holding,” receiving the most references:

No. References	Category
20	Vehicle Holding
10	Remote Holding
9	Extend Slips (general reference)
9	Local Traffic
6	Option D - 320 Feet
6	Displacements/Property Acquisition
5	Funding/Costs
5	Parks & Recreation
5	Vehicle Ingress/Egress/Turnaround
4	Tariffs
4	Pedestrian/Bicycle
4	Wildlife & Vegetation
3	Design & Construction
3	Visual Impact
3	Type of Vessel
3	Option A - No Extension
3	Improve Public Safety
2	Additional Option for Port Townsend
2	Frequency/Schedule
2	Public Involvement
2	Coordination w/ Other Area Projects (e.g. Hood Canal)
1	Right of Way
1	Transit
1	Option C - 220 Feet
1	Fisheries
1	Emergency Response
1	Way of Life
1	Reliability

The following are general subjects reflected in comments and representative quotes, and are contained in the highest-referenced categories: Vehicle Holding, Remote Holding, Extend Slips, Local Traffic, and Option D. Full text of all comments can be found in Appendix B.

Holding and Queuing

While holding and queuing are inherently related to slip extension, some comments were related to queuing considerations, regardless of holding/slip extension size. Examples include:

Vehicle queuing along the state highway and other on-land facilities is a minor problem which should and can be tolerated by residents and visitors of Port Townsend.

The options presented for increasing the dock's vehicle-holding area, to mitigate the current unsustainable overflow impact on city streets, are at best of a band-aid nature.

Take out poplar trees along Sims Way and use extra two lanes for ferry parking.

Slip Extension

Most comments regarding slip extension were in support of Option D (6 comments out of 9), but comments ranged from a preference for keeping slips in their current location to simply “extending the slips.” The following are some examples:

We favor the option of increasing holding area by extending the slips farther into the water. Port Townsend already has a severe shortage of parking and “uplands.”

The PT waterfront is a scarce resource. ...There are many upland opportunities and options for parking vehicles, while there is only one waterfront, one bay, one chance to preserve what we have. ...I urge you to take every opportunity to select upland parking and staging operations over additional over-the-water parking options.

It seems to me, the 320' extension is a no-brainer. It gives the maximum parking with the least in-shore modifications.

Local Traffic

Comments reflected concern about current and future traffic conditions in Port Townsend. Comments of this nature included:

The best action at this time appears to extend the loading and holding area to help alleviate traffic congestion on the street.

I would like to see the ferry dock moved outside the city limits to cut down on extreme in-town gridlock and holding areas.

[The] current on-street ferry line is not working for egress from Bay View Restaurant and 2 condo buildings and motel – very dangerous to exit without a “spotter” and city police [are] not always available.

Community Character

Public comments included questions and concerns over Port Townsend's general way of life and the overall character of the community. These comments were diverse in topic, ranging from the poplar trees at the entrance to the city, to concern over preserving the waterfront view and pedestrian friendly walkways. Comments included:

The only thing I'm strongly concerned about is the preservation of the poplar population along the road into Port Townsend. They are very close to our hearts and an integral part of what makes Port Townsend a lovely place to visit and live in, as we do.

Keep the Rotary Park where it is. It makes a good visual separation between the ferry facility and the city and is a good meeting place for foot passengers and cars.

Pedestrians and transit are not “just a detail,” they are essential elements to the design.

Eliminating the park and parking adjacent to the bank will subtract needed parking for merchants as well as those waiting to pick up or discharge passengers.

It would be nice to see a design on building(s) that reflect on Pt. Townsend’s past rather than some cheap (low-bid) design that looks horrible and we must live with for the next 50 years.

I am most concerned that the option of extending the slips 320 feet into the bay will not fit with Port Townsend’s “small town” character.